

What is claimed is:

1. Method of enhancing the performance properties of aqueous polymer dispersions comprising water-soluble ionic compounds, which comprises removing at least 50 mol% of the water-soluble ionic compounds from the polymer dispersion and then adding at least one salt of a monoalkyl or dialkyl ester of a sulfonated dicarboxylic acid.
2. Method according to claim 1, wherein the aqueous polymer dispersion is obtained by emulsion polymerization.
3. Method according to one of claims 1 and 2, wherein the dispersed polymer in the polymer dispersion is a polymer obtainable by free-radical addition polymerization which is synthesized from at least 60% by weight of what are called principal monomers selected from C₁ to C₂₀ alkyl (meth)acrylates, vinyl esters of carboxylic acids containing up to 20 carbon atoms, vinylaromatics having up to 20 carbon atoms, ethylenically unsaturated nitriles, vinyl halides, vinyl ethers of alcohols containing 1 to 10 carbon atoms, aliphatic hydrocarbons having 2 to 8 carbon atoms and one or two double bonds, or mixtures of these monomers.
4. Method according to one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the water-soluble ionic compounds are ionic emulsifiers.
5. Method according to one of claims 1 to 4, wherein at least 90 mol% of the water-soluble ionic compounds are removed.
6. Method according to one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the ionic compounds are removed by treating the dispersion with an ion exchanger resin, by diafiltration or by dialysis.
7. Method according to one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the salt of a monoalkyl or dialkyl ester of a sulfonated dicarboxylic acid is a dialkyl ester.
8. Method according to one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the salt of a monoalkyl or dialkyl ester of a sulfonated dicarboxylic acid is a dialkyl ester of sulfonated succinic acid.
9. Method according to one of claims 1 to 8, wherein the salt of a monoalkyl or dialkyl ester of a sulfonated dicarboxylic acid is added in an amount of from 0.01 to 5 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of the dispersed polymer.
10. Aqueous polymer dispersions obtainable by a method according to one of claims 1 to 9.

11. Use of the polymer dispersion according to claim 10 as an adhesive, especially pressure-sensitive adhesive.
- 5 12. Use according to claim 11, wherein at least one of the substrates to be bonded using the adhesive is a transparent polymer film.
13. Use according to claim 12, wherein the adhesive is applied to a transparent polymer film backing material.
- 10 14. Use according to claim 13, wherein the transparent polymer film is a film of PVC, especially plasticized PVC, polyethylene or polypropylene.
- 15 15. Self-adhesive articles obtainable with use according to one of claims 11 to 14.